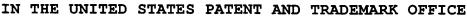
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Examiner: Douglas, S.

Serial No. : 09/376,992 Art Unit: 3751

Filing Date: 05/31/00 Dkt. No.: STEU-2662

Title: Apparatus and Method for Providing Container Filling in an

Aseptic Processing Apparatus

Applicant(s): Taggart

Assistant Commissioner For Patents Washington, D.C. 20231

Amendment

Sir:

In response to the Office Action of May, 31, 2000, please amend the above-referenced patent application as follows:

In the Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

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1. (Amended) Apparatus comprising:

a valve for controlling a flow of product;

a first sterile region surrounding a region where the product exits the valve;

a <u>continuously sterilized</u> second sterile region positioned proximate said first sterile region <u>whereby said</u> second sterile region is continuously sterilized during <u>operation</u>;

a valve activation mechanism for controlling the opening or closing of the valve by extending a portion of the valve from the <u>continuously sterilized</u> second sterile region into

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